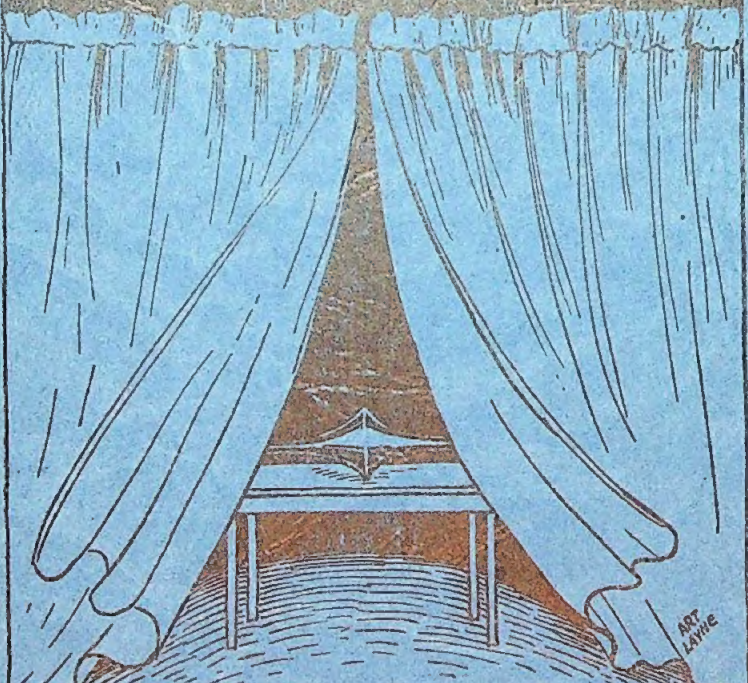


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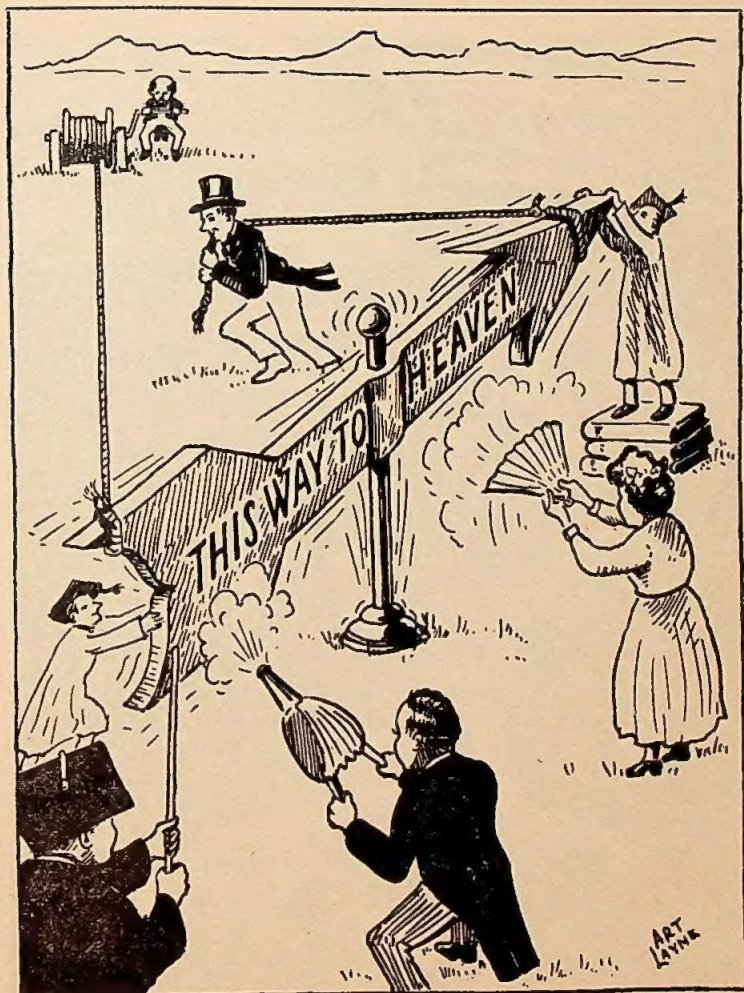
SPIRITISM



ART
LAYNE

and **KINDRED BEGUILLEMENTS**

by **B. H. SHADDUCK, PH. D.**



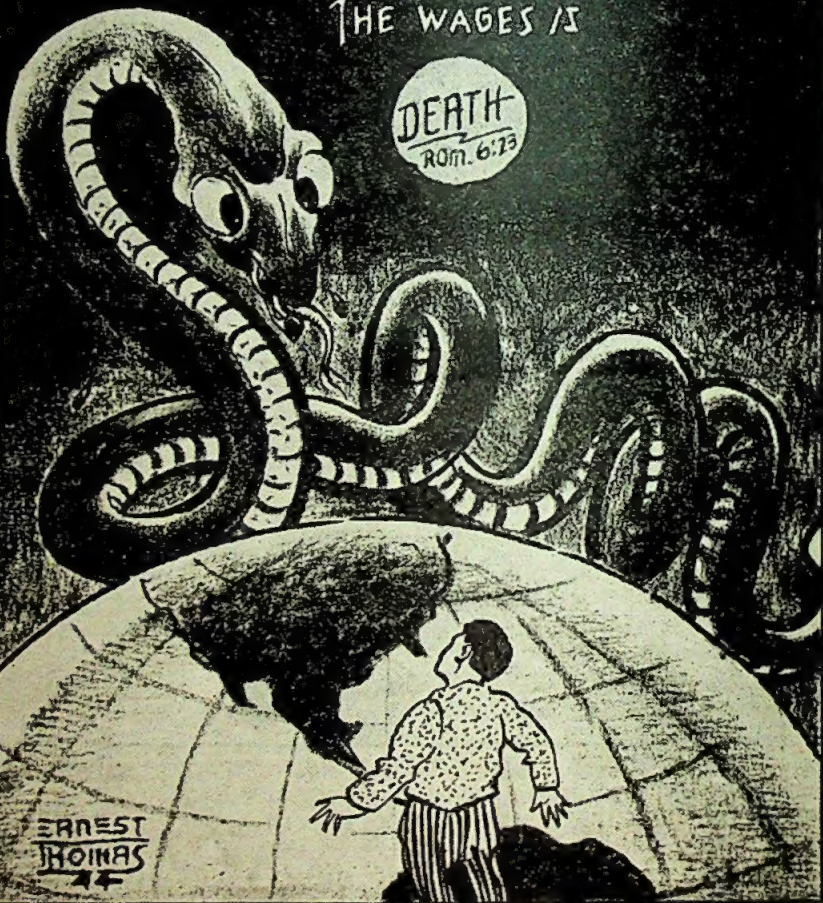
This would be a much better world to live in, if all the time, money, and energy that has been used to warp the doctrines of the Bible to fit someone's theories, had been devoted to making people fit to live in heaven. A theory that undertakes to get sin-lovers into heaven without regeneration, needs another theory to lock them in when they are bored with heaven conditions.

Charmed

BUT Oh!

THE WAGES IS

DEATH
ROM. 6:23



ERNEST
THOMAS
24

Preliminary

By the Author

For fifty years I have marvelled at the amazing capers of the human mind.

We are never very far removed from mental conditions that border on insanity.

In dreams and when delirious with a fever, reason only fumbles with reality. Alcohol or benumbing drugs in the blood stream will unbalance the mind. If you have ever seen a man dropping tears in his beer or bowing to a clothing dummy in a show window you will know what I mean.

Quite apart from feeble-mindedness due to poisons in the blood stream, there are mental states that have never been explained, except to shallow thinkers. I refer to such phenomena as hypnotism, hysteria, cataplexy, and clairvoyance. I doubt if all these mental states have yet been cataloged.

One man is a miser, another a spendthrift. Which one, if either, is altogether sane? One man is thrilled with a dog fight, another is much distressed. One man can sentence women and children to death by starvation, another devote his life to service in a leper colony. Are sin and sanity joint dictators of the human will? Is sin the master of practice and sanity, the judge of theories?

It is difficult to understand how there can be hundreds of mutually exclusive cults, isms, and groups and all the product of individual or collective sanity. Most readers will agree that the vagaries of the human mind are most stridently obvious in some other folk.

If all the crack-pot theories and superstitions that men have believed, could be illustrated and displayed under one roof, it would be the world's greatest museum of freaks, and **a new annex would be needed for each generation.** If people who are in danger of being mis-

led by spiritism, astrology, or some other phase of sorcery, could visit such a museum and see the witch doctors, medicine men, and voodoo performers of all ages, pretending to frighten, bribe, deceive, or appease the spirits of the dead, it would be a wholesome education for all whose minds are not already befogged with some heresy.

Uncounted millions in Asia and Africa have been terrorized with the idea that spirits of the dead are meddlesome, mischievous, and spiteful if neglected or offended. Millions have gone hungry that they might put food on graves of ancestors. In India, they walk carefully, lest they step on some creature in which grandpa's spirit may be living. The Shintoism of Japan has to do with spirits of the dead. The author's wife was for years a missionary in Africa where illness and calamity were blamed on spirits of the dead. Witch doctor mediums were more feared than most Americans fear God. In our land, our female mediums seem to find the spirits very well satisfied with paying customers. The message of the apostles was, "Repent." The message of the "spirits" is, "Cheer up!"

Man, by nature is conscious of the supernatural—a God or gods that must be reckoned with. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." People who are aware of sin, must do one of 5 things if they are to retain any measure of self-approval. They must get rid of the guilt of sin in God's way; blame it on someone else; adopt a religion that denies it; neutralize it(?) by ceremonies or self-righteous deeds; or join so many groups and wrap life up in so many social activities that there isn't any time left for thinking about sin.

There are more than 100 dead for each person living, and if they are all to be consulted by those in whom they are presumed to be interested, we shall have little time to consider our responsibilities to God.

Spiritism

(Reprinted from the Sunday School Times)

Follies and Dangers of Spiritism

In my youth the people I knew were afraid of ghosts.

In the long winter evenings, visiting neighbors related so many ghost stories that I was afraid to go out of the house alone after dark. There were some who testified that they had seen and heard ghosts, but on such occasions they were so badly scared and left the scene so hurriedly that details were amplified by imagination. If a person about to die said to an enemy, "I will haunt you after I am dead," the threatened one was not envied by anyone. No one that I knew could have believed that twenty years later people would be paying mediums to procure a haunting. It was about that time that the Fox sisters were reintroducing necromancy, one of the abominations forbidden in the Bible.

We had our superstitions. Like thousands of other communities, we had one woman who told fortunes from tea leaves and by gazing into a crystal. She also interpreted dreams. If the contribution of the customer was generous, the revelations were likely to be cheerful. I often played with the children of the fortune teller and observed that when any of the family lost anything, they hunted for it in the old-fashioned way.

In every home there was an almanac, and it was often consulted to determine what sign of the zodiac ruled any given period. These signs and the phases of the moon were accepted by many as unerring guides in doing or leaving undone many activities on the farm. Older folk believed that if the saucer-shaped new moon was so tilted that an Indian could not hang his powder horn on the lower point, it would be a wet

month, but, if it had the angle of a good hat rack, it would be a dry month. Most of the older people had a long list of portents, omens, and signs, such as dropping a dishcloth, a rooster crowing on the doorstep, or how one treated a mirror, a ladder, an umbrella, Friday, and the number thirteen.

I mention these superstitions because, to believe them, one must assume that the invisible world is filled with personalities that rival God and cheat Satan. Obviously, if there are intelligent forces that watch the wanderings of black cats, they must determine when the cats are sufficiently black and determine what kind and quantity of bad luck shall overtake the careless. Observe that the moral conduct of people is not so important as obedience to the decrees of the witch doctors who started the traditions. A rabbit's foot will do as much for a villain as it will for a philanthropist. The half-wit and scholar are on the same level in the kingdom of pow-wow. The hopeless phase of the system, if people would think, is that no human being can hope to know all the whims of the unnamed powers that are supposed to plague the uninformed.

Warping The Faith of Childhood

In childhood I heard fairy tales and wished that I might team up with a fairy as an intimate pal. I believed in Santa Claus, and that somehow he knew how well I behaved in December. When the myths of bedtime stories were out-grown, I began to doubt much of what was currently believed, and, as will appear later, I doubted too much.

As a boy, I sometimes tilted a chair so that only one leg touched the floor, and turned the chair as a top spins on its point. My mother solemnly warned me that it was a sure sign that I would cry before I slept. Meaning no impertinence, I said, "I don't believe the chair has anything to do with my tears." She answered, "We shall see." Mother was right. I saw it **because she had seen it.** Next day, I whirled a chair where she

didn't see it, and went tearless to bed. I hid a silver dollar (my total wealth) and promised it to the fortune teller if she would tell where it was. I kept my dollar and my doubts multiplied. I tried secretly planting potatoes and onions in the wrong phase of the moon, and other seeds when the signs of the zodiac forbade it. I mistreated ladders and umbrellas, and defied all the traditions that I could of the "goose-bone" prophets. I discovered that the tilt of the new moon depended on how near it was to the horizon when seen. But the fear of ghosts was so deep-seated that a snow man in a graveyard at night would have suggested that then and there I discover how fast I could take my feet up and put them down nearer home.

Kept From Going Too Far

I doubted and disproved so much of the "traditions of the elders," that I began to doubt the fundamentals of Christianity. In this I hesitated, because I reflected that before there could be a counterfeit, there must be something genuine. I observed that in all nature where there was a need, there was something to meet that need. The duck hatched in an incubator craves water—it needs water, and to fit that need, it has waterproof feathers and webs between its toes. But there can be a counterfeit instead of the water. In the oil fields, I have known a duck to alight in a great pool of oil and never fly again; yet the longing in the duck argued that there is water for ducks somewhere. The baited trap does not prove to a snared animal that hunger is superstition. The human race craves contact with the supernatural; all the fake and sham and imitation does not discredit the supernatural. Instead of fairies, there are angels. Instead of the scares of witch doctors there are demons. False prophets are only Satan's substitutes for true prophets. I never quite got away from the conviction that if there were spiritual forces that could modify my life for good, it would be abysmal folly not to tie up with such forces. In the years of my ministry I have observed

that God has provided few blessings that may not be imitated, counterfeited, or modified so that the substitute is a curse.

Abnormal and Subnormal Mental States

At the age of nineteen, I took work as an officer of the Salvation Army and served where poverty and ignorance stripped sin of its glamor. I observed the phenomena of insanity, hysteria, melancholia hypnosis, catalepsis, intoxication, delirium, and some mental states that I could not define. I surmised that clairvoyance was nothing more than self-hypnosis. But certainly God reads our thoughts and He can convey His thoughts to us without using a language. If men or demons transfer thoughts to mediums, they never reveal anything that displeases the forces of evil.

Bible Accounts of Supernatural Mental States

Peter was in a trance; Paul had visions; Stephen saw the heavens opened; Paul was in the third heaven; John was "in the Spirit"; and spiritual floodgates were opened at Pentecost; Pharaoh had divinely sent dreams; Saul, king of Israel, had some amazing experiences that have puzzled expositors (I Sam. 19:24); and our Lord delivered many from demon possession. That evil spirits used human minds and vocal chords is clearly evident in the case of the damsel who had "a spirit of divination" (Acts 16:16), and in the story of the evil spirit whose knowledge was limited (Acts 19:15). Certainly the Bible testifies that there are angel spirits who minister to the "heirs of salvation," and evil spirits that multiply the folly of sin-lovers. People who would not allow their children to furnish a tea party from a strange medicine closet ought to read carefully the labels that God has put on those who traffic with evil spirits or pretend to be agents for good. In Deuteronomy 18:10-12, R. V., is a list of some of them: "There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through

the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiceth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah." In casting out evil spirits, our Lord described them as "unclean," "evil," and "devils" (demons).

A Demoniac

I have known many people whose behavior, at times, seemed to be motivated by demons, but this man suggested a cursing machine made of flesh and blood. He was looking through the window of his cell in the jail of a small county seat in the mountains. It was a warm day, and the window was open, save for the bars. Obscenity, emphasized with profanity, poured from his lips in a torrent, **when he observed anything that was alive.** Little children who passed the jail on their way to school were cursed with language so obscene that it was quite beyond their understanding. When no child was in sight, he cursed the sparrows hopping about in the street. A cow went by on her way to pasture, and a blast of invective was aimed at her. I think he would have cursed an angel if one had been visible. When officers came to remove him to an asylum for the insane, they seemed much entertained and led him through the town on the way to the railroad station, and he addressed vile insults to every woman in sight. I have wondered how any self respecting person who heard him could thereafter knowingly line up on the Devil's side of any question. Well might Satan say, "If you help my helpers, you are helping me."

God planted in man a hunger for the supernatural, and made ample provision to satisfy that hunger. In the 14th chapter of John, believers are promised the companionship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Of the angels, Hebrews 1:14 asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister

for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Some people prefer the ministrations of mediums, because they do not rebuke the sins of the customer.

Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar found that their collection of sorcerers utterly failed when they were most needed, **yet the soothsayers and enchanters continued through the centuries.** Are all these pretended agents of dead folk and unidentified spirits inspired of Satan? I think not; some of the drivel is beneath the mentality of a demon. A clever rogue does not need diabolical inspiration to deceive those who have a misguided hunger for the supernatural. A tallow candle can singe the wings of a moth, and a slot machine has really less intellect than the men who feed money into it.

A Ghost Story

It was when I was employed as a teacher in a training school for young men. The dormitory was a large dwelling in the business section of a large city. It had been leased for a sum little more than enough to pay the taxes, because it was a "haunted" house. There were blood stains, they said, on the floor. They penetrated the wood so deeply that we could not wash them away. Evidently they were made by some indelible dye. There were only about a dozen boys, and, being single, I stayed with them in the dormitory on the second floor. I think we were all thrilled with the adventure of rooming together in a "haunted" house, though money could not have hired any of us to stay in the house alone.

About a week after we began living there, at four o'clock in the morning, we had more chills than thrills. We were all awakened by sounds on the ground floor that easily suggested a death struggle. In those days we had neither telephone nor electricity in the house. Ten minutes before it happened my trust was in the Lord; thirty seconds after it happened, I would have trusted in my legs if there had been any place to go. Because no one dared go to bed without investigation.

and no one was willing to go down the stairs alone, and no one dared to stay alone upstairs if the others went down, we were all forced to go down, or spend the balance of the night in terror. By this time all was quiet below, and with two or three oil lamps, I led the night-shirt patrol down the stairs. The place was empty, and all doors and windows were locked from the inside.

Next morning the hilarity of the older folk at the breakfast table was unrestrained when we told our story. Our fright was credited to a nightmare or a prank that some one of our number had played. The boys felt that they had been made the victims of a cruel joke.

About a week later, the ghost performance was repeated with more noise than before. This time we acted quickly; we had been badgered until we were eager to catch our tormentors in the act. The noise suddenly ceased when we started downstairs, and by the time we reached the lower floor, all was quiet and no door or window had been opened. Just then, it occurred to someone that there was a cellar under the house that we had never thought of before. With courage activated by fear, we went wide-eyed and trembling into the cellar to find it empty and no visible entrance other than the way we entered,—just stone walls, and one place where it appeared that the wall had caved in and had been mended with planks. Seeing this, I directed that every light be extinguished, with matches held ready to relight them. In the total darkness I discovered the thinnest, faintest line of light between two planks. The planks closed the end of a tunnel, and at the other end, under another building, were bakers putting loaves of dough in a great oven. We slept well the balance of the night and then hammered in some spike nails where they did the most good. Next morning, one long table was surrounded with heroes. We admitted it. Our elders were

abashed; they admitted it. Why was the house "haunted"? We surmised that someone desired to force the owner to sell it for a fraction of its value.

Beware of Fortunetellers

Ten Reasons Why These Charlatans Cannot Help

Some months before I was married, I served a small congregation in an Ohio town. While visiting in a section called "Shantytown," I found a man who was paralyzed from his hips down. I explained as best I could God's good news for sinners, and the afflicted man seemed to be happily converted. The next time I called, he was eager to see me and ask me a question. He said: "The only way I have of getting money to feed my family is by telling fortunes. Must I give that up?"

I answered as kindly as I could, "You cannot be a Christian and swindle people."

He protested: "I do not swindle people. What I tell people comes true."

Obviously he was sincere, and seeing that I was unconvinced, he said, "Let me prove it by telling your fortune."

Gently I explained that I would think it a sin to consult a fortuneteller.

He said, "Before you decide that it is a swindle, give me a chance to prove that it is not."

Seemingly A Fair Test

This seemed so fair that I consented to listen. He said that I was one of seven children or would be the father of seven children. This was not true then or now. He said that I was engaged to be married. This would be a safe guess in the case of a young minister living in bachelor's quarters. He said that the young woman of the romance was coming to see me very soon. This I denied as impossible, because such a visit would have been considered most improper. His next revelation astounded me—I was utterly bewildered. He

said, "You are soon to go on a very long journey. You will cross a very large river that is deep and dark."

How did he know that?

I supposed that only three people on earth knew that I had that week accepted an appointment to take charge of a similar work in St. Louis, and at a time when the Mississippi River was near flood stage and discolored with mud. He had no information as to which direction I was going or what river I was to cross. There were other items to my "fortune," but they were commonplace, and I was so puzzled that they made no lasting impression on my memory. I do not even remember my parting words and the prayer that I offered.

On my way home I stopped at the post office and was handed a letter from the young woman who later shared my name. In the letter she said: "Father is driving through to East Liverpool on business. I am riding with him. We shall stop at your place for dinner." My mind was in great confusion. I wonder how many people have had their faith warped by such evidence. Fortunately for my peace of mind, a letter came two days later and it said, "Father has changed his plans. We are not coming." Then I began somewhat prayerfully to take the experience apart to see what had really happened.

(1) I had received no helpful information.

(2) Revealing my expected trip **did not tell me anything I did not already know.** It did not tell me more than a fraction of what I knew.

(3) The predicted visit was **a plan in someone's mind,** and the fortuneteller could not foresee a change of mind.

(4) If, as some believe, an evil spirit was speaking through an impoverished cripple who had professed faith in Christ, then that spirit was a meddling, eaves-dropping gossip, without power to bring things to pass.

(5) If, as some believe, it was a mere coincidence, then such coincidences are quite out of proportion to mathematical probabilities.

(6) Whatever the source of the information, other matters of vastly greater importance—**matters wherein I needed guidance, were omitted.**

(7) The prophecies of my future did not in any way depend on my moral conduct. The word "if" was not in the predictions. In the Bible, God offers men alternatives.

(8) If the promise of seven children were really dependable, it would wrap my life up in fatalism, and I must of necessity be immortal until the prediction reached consummation.

(9) If the prediction of the visit was mind reading, there were millions of minds, and some directive force must bring into focus the mind that contemplated the visit.

(10) The predictions did not deal with finalities; fortunetellers never do. If he had guaranteed me long life, prosperity, popularity, and power to rule multitudes, yet I could have asked, **"After that what?"** Eternity was left untouched.

A School For Mediums

One night in Wheeling, W. Va., there was such a downpour of rain that I was surprised to have a caller. A dripping man stood at my door and asked me to go with him to a session of a school for mediums. Someone in authority had invited him to attend one session because it was thought he was an undeveloped medium, with latent powers he little suspected. I knew this man as one with a brilliant mind and a flair for investigation and adventure. Very frankly I told him that I would not attend as one having leanings toward spiritism, and that I would not sit in the circle or invite any contact with spirits. This was agreed, and I went with him.

Because of the storm, only the teacher, a bulky, elderly woman, and six male pupils greeted us. My friend sat in the circle about a large table; I sat about 15 feet distant, and two uninvited visitors sat much farther back behind me. We were in the third story, and the room was very poorly lighted. If there had been any spirits present, they should have known that my friend was a spy and I was a tattler.

The seance began by asking questions of the spirit that dominated the table. After each question, the table rapped once, twice, or three times, which in their code, meant "Yes," "No," "Doubtful" or unwilling to answer. They asked the table if there was an undeveloped medium at the table; the spirit answered "Yes." They asked if he was a married man; the spirit or table answered "No." The teacher asked me if this was true. I knew that he was married, but it was not my show, and I simply said, "Are you, Watkins?" He replied in a tone that might reveal his contempt for marriage, "Not much." Of course, as compared with movie stars, his accumulation of wives was negligible.

After some minutes of table knocking, the teacher rehearsed her pupils as trance mediums. Each medium had one or more controls, and the number of controls and the smoothness of the performance determined the grade of the medium. For the information of the reader, let me explain that the "control" is the spirit that takes possession of mind and vocal chords of the medium, and when this happens, the medium goes into a trance—at least the credulous so understand it. In this group all pupils were men, and oddly enough, all the controls were spirits of dead men.

The first control rolled a husky man on the floor, took possession, and the body of the medium arose and began with something like this: "Ugh! Me redskin brave. Me heap glad meet pale face brothers and white squaw chief." Apparently it was purely a social call, and after bringing greetings from beyond the "Great Divide," he departed, and the medium came

out of the trance with a slight spasm. The next performer was an elderly man of great girth. He did not fall to the floor—let the younger men do that—he slumped in his chair and then arose and gave an imitation of a locomotive, with “Choo, choo, choo,” and wailing tones that were meant for whistling at the crossing. The teacher explained that this control had been a brakeman in life. This medium had whiskers, and the beard projected like a “cowcatcher” of a locomotive. It was good comedy, but I dared not laugh. The two young men behind me roared with laughter, and the fat man came out of his trance in an angry frame of mind. Then the things **did** happen.

The medium who had entertained the Indian spirit collapsed again, and this time his control was **the spirit of a bad Indian**. (They do have some bad ones for emergencies.) This one was on a scalping expedition, and frankly announced his homicidal intentions. **He knew where to go to get his tomahawk**; he went to a rear room where they kept coal and kindling and turned leaping and waving a hatchet. He went after the boys who had laughed, and they literally rolled down the stairway. When that was done, the mediums pulled their raving mate to the floor and “cast out the spirit of the bad Indian.” All the mediums rehearsed with their controls, and the seance was ended, and they had an interesting argument over which ones had paid dues. There was some disagreement, and I wondered why one of the spirits had not been summoned as a revealer of the truth.

A Converted Medium

When I first knew him, he was a young man of white life and burning zeal for the Kingdom of God. One day I remarked in his presence that in my judgment all the alleged manifestations of spirits were only tricks played on a gullible public. To my surprise, he confessed that before his conversion, he had been a medium, and that he had witnessed manifestations

that were not due to trickery. His control, as he believed at the time, was the spirit of his dead father. At his request, his father **pulled his hair** when it was time for him to awaken or when he started to do something of which his father disapproved. His father was also active at seances. I said hastily, and very foolishly, "Prove it to me." I wanted my hair pulled or the spirit to do something that was startling. He looked at me, and tears wet his cheeks as he said, "**I could not do it without renouncing Christ.**" Then and there I realized that now, as in the days of the apostles, spiritism is of demon origin.

The Ouija Board

I have watched serious-minded investigators work with ouija boards and have observed three facts: (1) The more gullible the group is the better they will work. (2) I have never known them to write anything that resembled a word when the operators were blindfolded. (3) In every case that I have seen them work, they wrote what someone expected them to write, or what was in someone's mind.

Table Tipping

It happened in my own home. My daughter came home from a boarding school and told me that some of the girls in her dormitory had tried sitting about a small table, with eight hands, palms on table, each hand touching another to complete a circle. Then they asked questions of an anonymous spirit, and after repeated calls, the table tipped and rapped the floor. When the faculty heard of this they rebuked the girls in chapel, telling the student body that such doings were the work of Satan. I said that no doubt the evil one would be glad to have the girls misled, but that I much doubted if a spirit moved the table. Determined to convince me, she collected some schoolmates and asked me to witness the performance, and to her surprise, I consented. When all was ready she asked a question of the "dear spirit." I protested that she

should address the table, and I framed the question addressed to the "dear table."

"Papa, if you make fun of it, it won't work."

"That is quite true," I replied. "Tipping tables always sulk if you divert the attention of the operators."

I ceased all interference, and after repeated questioning, the table tipped and rapped the floor.

"See, Papa, see!"

"Yes, I have seen what you did not see. Your biceps muscles swelled and the table tipped toward you. Your eagerness caused you to tip the table **unconsciously**." With four pairs of eyes watching, the table lost its motive power.

The Water Witch

To locate the spot to dig a well, the old-timers used to take a forked branch and walk to and fro across the lot until the branch twisted in their hands and pointed to the ground. A farmer lad told me that his grandfather could locate water under ground in this way, and I said, "Let's try it." Grandpa accepted the challenge and cut a branch of the kind and shape that he said never failed. While he was preparing the witch, we covered a large pan of water, and later Grandpa walked over it without finding it. It seemed that the branch would twist only where the old man expected it to twist.

The Evil Eye

Soon after I was installed as the pastor of a city church, a member of the official board warned me to beware of an unfortunate man who had an "evil eye." The tradition was that when this man looked into the eyes of another, he imparted a curse. It was said that those who knew him would turn up a side street to avoid a meeting. I asked what I must do if, before I knew the man, he looked in my eyes. The answer was given in all seriousness,

"Take off your hat and spit in it."

That man may have looked in my eyes, because a hundred times since then I have had sorrow and disappointment that a credulous person could have credited to the "evil eye." Blessings unnumbered have been mine, and I credit them to "the eyes of the Lord" that "run to and fro through the whole earth."

A Spiritualist "Church"

I once attended a "revival" meeting in a "Spiritualist Church." The "evangelist" was advertised as a famous Indian medium. Evidently he was a Negro who used hair-straightening chemicals. None of the congregation saw or heard any spirits. He did the seeing and hearing for the entire congregation. **It just happened** that most of the spirits present **were related to the strangers present.** When my turn came, the medium saw a gray-haired woman who came up the aisle and stopped by my side. He questioned and badgered me for a minute or two, demanding that I respond to my inner convictions and declare her relationship to me. He knew (?), of course, but insisted that I confirm his information. He was getting angry, and to quiet him I said, "Perhaps you mean my mother." "You knew very well that I meant your mother," he replied. Somewhat mollified, he repeated the message my mother was waiting for him to vocalize. Mother (?) said, "That matter that has been troubling you will turn out all right." I don't know yet what was troubling me. For my wife, he brought a little girl up the aisle to tell her mamma that she was very happy in the spirit world. As the child was invisible, we could not decide which she looked most like—her father or her mother, and anyhow, we have never buried a little girl. There was a message for a mother who was deaf, and the preacher-medium quite lost his temper when she did not answer the questions he asked. The spirits had not advised him that the woman was deaf. Every message

that came that night was like one of the two samples I have given.

The Challenge

Many times I have found members of my congregations related to mediums or to people who visit them, and in defense of my teaching I have proposed a test that no medium thus far has ever met. I have repeatedly dared them to **reveal some fact, easily verified, that was information not known at that time to any human.** The test was to be fourfold to guard against a successful guess. I can best illustrate by describing such a test.

In a community where spiritism was rampant, I was asked to address a great audience in a Gospel tent and propose such a test. The community was stirred by the announcement, and it was said that many mediums were present. At the close of my address, I took a coin from my pocket and said, "This coin has a date on it; no one knows that date." Next I produced a streetcar transfer with a similar remark as to the number thereon. Then I showed a scrap of paper that had been torn from a magazine in a dark closet without noticing what was printed thereon. Finally I took a spoonful of rice and spread these items before any spirit that cared to look. To give the spirit every advantage, a small boy turned each item, except the rice. Then all was put in a tin can, sealed, and given to a committee to write their names across the seal. Then I said, "If any medium, now or within a week, will reveal the date, number, and subject matter of these items, I will publicly acknowledge my defeat." That challenge was never accepted, though tried on other occasions, and so far as I know, no medium has ever revealed what was not in someone's mind.

Elisha revealed to the king what was in the mind of the enemy (2 Kings 6:9), but **mediums never betray the forces of evil.** Satan's kingdom is not divided against itself. No medium told Norway of the plottings

of Hitler. No witch told us that the Japs were on the way to Pearl Harbor. Thousands of revolting crimes are committed, but mediums do not reveal the identity or location of the criminals. If mediums have contact with spirits that know all about human intrigue and villainy, then there should be a medium in every courthouse and executive mansion.

Hypnotism as a Factor in Seances

In the hills of West Virginia, I met Henry H—, a man of some wealth, who built the only church in his community and donated it debt-free to the congregation. His sons and their mother were earnest workers in the church. Henry was a financial asset and a moral liability. I was often a guest in the home.

Before I knew the family a ghastly crime was committed in the community, and the body of a headless man was found in his small cabin. It was a greater mystery because it was believed the man had neither money nor enemies. The sheriff could find no clues, and dropped the investigation. Henry decided to bring the criminals to justice. He visited a famous medium who lived more than a hundred miles away. He told me of that visit, and the recital was of such interest that I am able to repeat the important details just as he told me. At the home of the medium a woman ushered him into a waiting room, and asked the purpose of his visit. The attendant then put in his hands a "trumpet," and said to him, "If this trumpet is too heavy for you to hold, the spirits will speak to you; if it does not get heavy, they will not speak." This "trumpet" was something like the bell portions of two trombones soldered together at the flaring ends. Henry said that the trumpet became so heavy that he could not hold it. Let me explain that this was **hypnotism in its most obvious form**. What happened next is anybody's guess—Henry was hypnotized. As he reported it, he was led into the presence of the famous medium. She greeted him with,

"Hello, Henry."

"How do you know my name?"

"You are Henry H—— from H——, and your son, French, teaches a class in the Sunday School. You wish to speak with the man who was murdered."

Presently Henry heard a voice that he recognized as that of the dead man, and again he was greeted with, "Hello, Henry. What do you want with me?"

"How many people were involved in your murder?"

"Two."

"Who were they?"

"Trouble, trouble, trouble."

The medium explained that this answer meant that the spirit declined to make trouble for anyone. The next question was,

"Why did they kill you?"

"Trouble, trouble, trouble."

"What did they do with your head?"

"It is buried in the rivulet that runs past the cabin."

When Henry returned, he hired men to dig up the rivulet and the ground adjacent, but no head was found.

It was a waste of words to explain to Henry that he had spent more money than the family gave to the church in a year to go 200 miles and have a medium tell him his name and a spirit tell him where to find a head that was not there.

Beguiling the Bereaved

Human grief may approximate insanity. I have known a woman to weep over the picture of a sweet-heart, "dead these forty years." Turning from the grave of a child, a mother said to her husband, "We have no home now; it is only a house." When asked to become a Christian, a father who grieved for the loss of an only son said: "I want to go where my boy

went. If he missed Heaven, I don't want to go there." A woman who seldom smiled, said, "I am so happy. I saw my mother in a dream last night." I knew a grief stricken mother who was greatly comforted because she saw her son in a dream, and he smiled. Tennyson spoke for millions when he wrote:

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.

Mediums profit by the grief of others. They offer to materialize the spirits of the dead so that they may be heard, seen, or touched, at least, by the medium. We are so used to material limitations for the body that we can the more easily believe that angels are with us, if they do something to our nerve ends. I mean the nerve ends that report sight, hearing and touch to consciousness. Moses endured "as seeing him who is invisible." So may we.

Thinking of the Spiritual in the Terms of the Material

Where are the spirits of the dead in Christ? Paul's answer was, "Absent from the body . . . at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8, R. V.).

Where is the Lord? Ephesians 1:20 answers that He is at God's "right hand in the heavenly places."

May we also be with Him? The next chapter (R. V.) assures us that God "made us to sit with him in the heavenly places" (2:6). This may easily be confusing to anyone whose thinking **puts the material limitations of space on the spirit.**

Paul was in prison, but his spirit was not imprisoned. In 1 Corinthians 5:3, he speaks of being "absent in the body, but present in the spirit." In 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, he mentions a visit to the third heaven, not knowing whether he was in the body or not.

The 12th chapter of Hebrews begins with, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great

a cloud of witnesses . . . " Who are those who make up the enveloping cloud? The previous chapter gives us a background, but read on until you are overawed with the sublimity of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th verses: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator . . ."

We cannot exalt the MEDIATOR and, in some darkened room, seek the ministrations of the MEDIUM. Are we to think of all the billions who have died as a vast reservoir of spirits, waiting to be summoned by mediums (mostly women) to tell trusting contributors that they have nothing much to be worried about. With "an innumerable company of angels," all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation," can anyone who believes in God, believe also that he has made the dead, good and bad, the commercial assets of people not noted for their piety—at least a million dead for each alleged medium?

"On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?" (Isa. 8:19, R. V.)

The Danger of Astrology

The following letter was addressed to Dr. B. H. Shadduck, whose three articles on Spiritism appeared in the TIMES September 30, October, 14 and 21:

Dear Dr. Shadduck: After reading your articles in THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES, especially, "Beware of Fortunetellers, "I have wondered whether you might not tell us of the basis and dangers of astrology. I have a friend who gives large attention to

that mystic cult, and who writes horoscopes, and seems to have influence with people who apparently wish to know what directs their lives, and what the future on earth is providing for them. He asks for people's birthdays, in order to determine what planet rules their lives. Can you tell of the proper antidote for this cult? What book exposes it, and gives the remedy? To me it seems that it is a revival of ancient Egyptian or Hindoo mythology.—A California reader.

Astrology is not a new subject for Dr. Shadduck, but before replying to this letter he wrote that he wanted to "spend an afternoon at the public library making sure of my facts." His characteristic reply follows:

"A sensible young man who has a leap year proposal from one of many sisters will do well to make inquiry about the entire family. Astrology is one of many branches of divination.

"Our local fortuneteller has a curtained 'cave of the winds' in a storeroom in the business district. In the show window she advertises 'Spiritual Readings,' Astrology, Phrenology, Numerology, Palmistry. Dream Interpretation, and how to win at gambling. She ought to sell rabbits' feet and advertise with a totem pole.

"Man was made in God's image, and though that image has been sadly marred with sin, man has a hunger for the supernatural and a desire to hide his sin. The unrepentant are determined to keep their sin and long for some arrangement so that God or the gods will not meddle with it. That makes the going easy for the medicine man, the witch doctor, and the cult founder.

"It is argued that astrology is very ancient. Yes, it began in the days when pagans offered human sacrifice and worshiped goddesses with rites that were

unspeakably indecent. In those days it was based on an astronomy that regarded the earth as the center of the universe and the largest body in existence. Only about 7,000 stars were visible and some of the planets were unknown. As heat, light, rain, wind, and lightning came out of the sky, it was easy to surmise that the stars radiated forces that the nation must reckon with. It is significant that **planets and gods had the same names**. The priests claimed to find in the conjunction of the planets, the will of the gods concerning the rulers.

"When astronomy became heliocentric (sun centered), and the earth was known as one of the planets, astrology and astronomy parted company as far as the east is from the west.

To presume that Jupiter, 1,400 times as large as the earth, and Neptune, twenty-seven hundred million miles away, meddle with the babies born under their particular spell, requires an amazing credulity or a woeful lack of information. Now we know that there are about 700 smaller planets (planetoids) to radiate destiny (if planets do), and if that is not enough to mess up astrological horoscopes, what could? Only Omniscience could make such intricate calculations, and the Son of God said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

"When kings no longer gave employment to astrologers, the system was adjusted to appeal to more humble customers. Astrologers divided the earth into sections like a peeled orange with twelve meridians and decided that the individual horoscope depended on the section that was in the ascendancy at the hour (not the day) of birth. That would take the profit out of modern astrology, because few customers know their birth hour, on the birth date. To meet this situation, astrologers ask only the birth date, and even that must be most uncertain if one is born about midnight on the undefined edge of a time zone. Very few

rural folk know where the zone boundary is and fewer know where it ought to be! Time zones must confuse even astrological planets. Indians and illiterate folk who most need help from the planets, if they do not know their birth date must struggle along through life without horoscopes.

"Perhaps the best answer to the hoax of modern astrology is the fact that three babies might be born within an hour and **have three different birth dates**, if their mothers were on a vessel about to cross the International Date Line at midnight. No one but God knows where that line ought to be. The nations fixed it by agreement and if they changed it to the Atlantic Ocean, my fifty-cent horoscope would be utterly ruined (I have one that was donated by a friend).

"It is probably an understatement that there are 170,000 babies born every day, and if the 700 big and little planets fix the destiny or even modify the mental drift of all of them according to the pattern for each day, how do astrologers know all the combinations? The planet Neptune takes 165 years to make its circuit, and if all the other planets were fixed like a nail in the wall, the relative position of Neptune to all the others on a given date could not be the same again before 165 years.

"It is often testified that predictions of astrologers are fulfilled. Similar testimony is given of tea leaves, palmistry, numerology, and the omens of black cats. It is not difficult to succeed at fortunetelling if one is clever in the use of cryptic phrases and ambiguous patter. I had a neighbor who was solemnly warned by an astrologer to 'beware of wheels.' That could mean anything from a wrist watch to a Ferris wheel. To heed the warning, one must have less equipment than an untamed red Indian. I once heard a pulpit orator compliment a young preacher who had tried to preach, with the remark, 'Brother, that was a great effort.'

"One who is clever in the choice of words can find pleasing words for unpleasant traits of character. Cowardice may be called caution. Credulity may be called faith. Laziness may be described as a passive disposition. One given to dissipation will pay 50 cents to be rated as convivial. A flirt is one with a loving disposition. Who will deny that a waster, who pokes nickels into a slot machine, is optimistic? Even a thief has acquisitive ways.

"What about births that are premature or somewhat delayed? Are they advanced or retarded by the planets to fit the disposition of the child, or is the disposition revised to fit the date of the first breath?

"If you wish to test the powers of an astrologer give him an accurate description of a friend and the year of the friend's birth. Answer all questions except the name of the person and the month and day of birth. As a precaution, let it be one whose birth day **you do not know**, other than the year. Ask the astrologer to reveal the exact date. He will have one chance in 365 of guessing right, if you do not give him time to get information from others. I tried such a method once and the diviner was very angry with me."

(Not printed in the Sunday School Times)

After "SPIRITISM" was printed in the Sunday School Times, letters that came in from readers made it clear that a further discussion was desirable.

Man is the only earth creature who has the gift of imagination in any other than the most rudimentary form.

How imagination can be played upon until mental images seem real, is a mystery that reaches beyond human exploration.

Swindling the Imagination

There was a time when I had three girls taking piano lessons and the eldest put too much muscular effort into her work. It seemed to me that the ham-

mers of the piano were aptly named, and I could understand why a lesson was called an **exercise**, but I did not feel comforted when her teacher spoke of her work as **execution**. I explained as fathers do, or think they do, that athletic development was not the result most to be desired. In self defense I hung a strip of thin cloth between the hammers and the strings to soften the hammer strokes. To my surprise, there was no perceptable change in the tones of the piano, but **there was a great change in the imagination of the girl**. She sat down to play and the tears flowed freely as she declared that it was impossible to get her lesson with a muted piano.

I had so obviously failed to subdue the tones of the instrument that I removed the cloth from the piano, but, as no one saw me do it, **I did not remove it from the imagination of the girls**. Next day, they summoned a jury of neighbors to listen to the piano and hear their arguments. The jury brought in a **verdict against me**, and I do not know what the sentence would have been if I had not opened the piano and showed them that there was no cloth there. That took it out of their imagination.

Years later a little granddaughter was playing about my desk, and I tried an experiment on her imagination. I put a tiny smear of red ink on one finger, and she went sobbing to her mother—apparently in pain which abated as soon as soothing ointment and a bandage was applied.

If I were a quack doctor, I would want a large office filled with mechanical contrivances and shelves filled with colored candy pills and a thousand bottles with mysterious liquids therein. The sorry fact is that if the law did not interfere, I could procure many testimonials.

Doctor Mon-Gos-Yah

The doctor was a clever white man with long hair and an Indian name. He was shunned by other doc-

tors and attended my meetings probably because no doctor belonged to my group. He was famous for miles around as one who could diagnose a case without seeing the patient. People wrote to him giving name, age, height, weight and duration of illness, and he replied, giving them the location of their aches and pains—at least that was the undisputed report that came to me. Those who were convinced sent four dollars for medicine for one month. He had many patients. Two of my friends went to see him about a third friend who was ill. They came back and reported that Mon-gos-yah had described the man's illness accurately.

How was it done?

Some said it was mental telepathy. Others said that neurotic patients would have pains anywhere the doctor said they were. If the doctor **guessed right** the report would spread like fire in dry grass. If he **guessed wrong** it could be explained on the theory that a pain in one place may really come from an ill in another place, as the head may ache when some other organ is sick. The mind has much to do with interpretation of what the nerves report, and many ills are aggravated, modified, or mollified by what the patient thinks.

This is not a slap at healing in answer to prayer, nor is it a confession that sickness is only an error of the mind. It is only a statement of fact that ought to be reckoned with in dealing with freak theories.

Could the doctor read the minds of people he had never seen? I do not know, but I know that I had occasion to call on him at the request of his wife to discuss certain family matters, and he knew nothing of my coming until I arrived. Certainly his wife's mind was not an open book to him. Some weeks later his secretary unexpectedly eloped to another state to get married, leaving him without office help for some weeks.

That some people can read minds seems to be a fact accepted by science; that demons have done so,

is the testimony of Scripture. I have no doubt that some mediums make use of any help within reach.

Hypnotism

I have indicated that hypnotism is a possible factor in Spiritism. I have been told by a great hypnotist that he could duplicate anything done at a seance, so that those under the hypnotic spell would see and hear as he willed. I met this man in line with my pastoral duties. There was in the group of sick folk that I visited, a woman who had for years been confined to a wheel chair. Her husband was a brilliant lawyer—a slave to drink. This man came to me and said that a great hypnotist was coming to the city, and doctors had told him if hypnotized, the woman might walk at the command of the hypnotist. Such a trial had been arranged, but the hypnotist would consent to no one being present but the husband and the pastor. I called on the hypnotist at his hotel and was earnestly invited to be present at the appointed hour. When the hour arrived the husband was not there, and it is charitable to suppose that he had forgotten. Obeying the hypnotist, I went into the home first and a moment later the hypnotist came in and I introduced him. His first test was to see if she was of the type that could be hypnotized. He said, "Please clasp your hands together." She did so and he pressed his hands over her hands and then said, "Now you can't get your hands apart." She tried frantically to get her hands apart and failed, until he touched them and they flew apart. That convinced him that the woman could walk if she thought she could walk, and a cure could be expected. Next he stroked her forehead and said, "You are very sleepy. You are passing into a deep sleep." Her head drooped and she was almost hypnotized, when the impropriety of going to sleep in the absence of her husband shocked her and she cried out, "Where is my husband?" The hypnotist could do no more. He assured me that he could not begin again where he had

failed. There was no "second chance." As we left the home, I paused on the porch, put my hands together and said, "Can you stick my hands together?" "No," he answered. "Why?" "Because I can't make you think they are stuck together." In the years that have followed, that remark has explained many things.

The hypnotist invited me to be his guest at a public performance, and I said, "I will come if you will duplicate the performances said to be seen and heard in seances hereabouts." He asked for details. I answered, "Such as seeing and hearing a guitar that is floating in the air untouched by human hands. Can you make your subjects see that?" He said, "I will," and I said, "Then I will be there."

That night, before the performance, he came to me and said, "The hotel where I stay is a hotbed of spiritism. I will make those under the hypnotic spell see and hear something beautiful. If I name it, I shall lose my happy home." He did all he promised. Men saw and heard what he told them to, and they were utterly unaware of the uproarious laughter when they did something ludicrous. They were astonished when their own minds were restored and they were told how they had behaved. A young man with sound teeth was told that he had a toothache that was located in a perfectly sound tooth. A dentist was called to the platform as a witness. The hypnotist said, "No wonder you have a toothache; here is a great cavity. When I put this steel instrument in the tooth you will jump." I saw that sound tooth touched with a pencil and the jump followed. The dentist was asked to observe that the face over the tooth was swollen.

As one act of the exhibition, the hypnotist was blindfolded with kid gloves pressed into his eye-sockets. Then while his back was turned to the audience the county clerk and a school teacher went up and down the aisles and at one of several stops, they took a ring from a woman's finger and, after other stops to confuse the blindfolded man, (if he listened),

they returned to the platform. Taking a wrist of each man he walked down into the audience (blindfolded) selected the right aisle, stopped at the right row of seats, and put the ring on the right finger of the right woman. Those men guided the hypnotist, but **they thought he guided them.** These narratives are given to show how sincere people may be deceived as to what really happens in the tense and awesome mental atmosphere of a seance.

My first experience with hypnotism of the spectacular type was near a platform on a vacant lot where "A great discoverer" (he confessed that much) was selling "Snake oil" and giving a show to get the crowd. As one feature of the performance a woman dentist invited anyone with a tooth that was no longer wanted, to come to the platform and she would pull the tooth without pain and without charge. Several men went to the platform and she rubbed the "Snake oil" on the outside of the face with gentle strokes and pulled the tooth. Every man declared that there was no pain. This was before dentists used cocaine, and I asked a dentist how the show woman did it. He answered with one word, "Hypnotism." The gentle strokes on the face induced a degree of hypnotism. Many people bought "Snake oil" and later the chemists found that there was no oil of any kind in it—only simple drugs and **imagination.**

I do not pretend to understand hypnotism. Frankly, I am afraid of it. One form of it is a deep sleep that may continue for days. Another phase puts the mind of the subject under the domination of the operator. There are some degrees that are scarcely perceptible; there is even possibility of self hypnotism.

Demon Domination

I do not know how much demons may know of our daily affairs, but the Bible makes it clear that they may occupy a human mind like bats in a belfry. People who go about with mental shutters flapping

to "every wind of doctrine," may expect company. It is good to have a mind preempted by the Spirit of God. If demons can do what hypnotists and mind readers can, people will be safer if they keep out of the company of those who traffic with the forces of evil. See 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

In my youth it was popular for people in "high society" to go slumming in company with a police officer. Such trips gave them a new thrill and confirmed them in convictions of superiority. I knew one young person who came back to her beautiful room, knelt by her lace covered bed and sobbed out a prayer, "Oh God, let me be as filled with thy Spirit as these people I have seen are full of the devil." God answered that prayer, and I knew her as a woman of God in gracious ministrations to slum dwellers.

I do not mean to imply that men who have become famous as hypnotists are in league with Satan, rather I am thankful that they have not started new cults by pretending to be deputies of God. There are so many people who are willing to hand their leading straps to anyone who can work such wonders, as telling them what they had for breakfast, without the usual means of knowing.

The Longing for Messages To or From the Dead

Fifty years ago, in a "speaking meeting" I heard an elderly woman tell a story that moved the congregation to tears. When she was a little girl, her mother was stricken with serious illness, and she was left to entertain herself as best she could. To do this she decided to make a new dress for her doll. In her search for scraps of silk, she entered the sick room. Her mother greeted her tenderly and said, "My dear, will you get mama a glass of water?"

"I am too busy. My dolly hasn't a thing fit to wear," she replied.

"Surely you can spare a minute to get poor sick mother a glass of water."

"Let someone else do it," she said and hurried from the room.

At bed time there was no one to hear her prayer or kiss her good night. Utterly miserable she knelt by her mother's empty chair and tried to pray. Then, smitten by remorse, she filled a glass with water and went to her mother's room. To one who opened the door she said,

"My mamma wants a glass of water."

"Not now dear, your mamma is very sick and the doctor is here."

That night she cried herself to sleep. When she wakened she hurried to her mother's room with a glass of water. Older members of the family were in the room and some were weeping. She looked upon her mother's face and said,

"Is my mamma dead?"

Her father explained as he carried her from the room. That was the story as I remember it, and in closing, the woman said, "Now after forty years, I would give all that I have in this world if mother would come back only long enough to let me put a glass of water in one hand and wet the other with my tears."

Spiritist mediums commercialize such sorrows and, in the dark, perpetrate the hoax of calling back the dead for a price.

Forty years of yearning to tell her mother of her repentance! She thought of her mother as with the Lord, and someone should have told the little penitent that, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." God does not keep good news from His glorified children. "In heaven there is joy over one sinner that repenteth." When King Saul visited a medium, he offered the excuse, "God is departed from me, and answereth me no

more...." An appeal from God to a medium did not help him; it never helps anyone.

One Fact Worth Many Theories

In young manhood I was once summoned to go with a skillful swimmer to recover the bodies of two drowned men. The place was a great pool in a small river made by a sharp bend after a fall of a few feet. Six men had gone in swimming on a dark night and after a cry for help only four came out on the shore. It was my fortune to recover one body, but we could not find the other. Later in the day, the sheriff's deputies set off heavy charges of dynamite on the bottom of the pool. I argued that the dynamite would tear great holes in the bottom into which pockets the body might be carried by the back surge of water and covered by the next blast. The sheriff replied that he **must** do something. Next they sent down a diver without success. Then the theorists took over, as theorists will. Some surmised that the current had taken the body down the river, others suspected that one man had killed the other and made his escape or had disappeared so that his family could collect a large insurance policy. In support of this, the prints of bare feet were found in soft ground on the steep bank on the opposite side of the pool. I saw them and wished that I had the skill of some archeologists, who can find such prints in the rocks and write learnedly of the shape of the man's jaw.

This was the opportunity for a medium, but none appeared, **while there was so much uncertainty.** Some days later, entrails were found floating on the pool and men who were credited with knowing, pronounced them human. Then a medium appeared and located the spot where the body would be found underneath. Another diver was secured and soon proved that the spirit was misinformed. Going over the bottom yard by yard the diver found a foot sticking out of the gravel in quite another place, and the recovered body had all its in-

ternal equipment undisturbed. Apparently some farmer had killed a domestic animal and disposed of the leavings in an easy way. All this confused the spirit and some learned men. Since then, I have harbored many doubts about the reports of learned men who disagree as to just what was happening on earth a million years ago. When human guesses are at variance with revelation, I reflect that no one in a dying hour has regretted believing the Bible too much. Sometimes theories are all we have in defining the unknown, but when eternity is at stake it is comforting to be sure of God.

The Water Witch Again

I have received a number of letters from readers who seemingly agreed with all that I had written, except that they believed I was mistaken in my "conclusions" as to the water witch.

What were my conclusions in that all too brief discussion of the device?

Only that I had seen it fail when put to a most exacting test.

What disturbs me is that the "divining rod," "Mercury's wand," "Aarons rod," or "dowser," as it has been called, does work sometimes, in some places for some people, and its performance is a talking point for fortunetellers.

A careful examination of the history of the divining rod, as given in the great standard encyclopedias shows that it has been used to locate coal, and other minerals or metals. I know it has been used to locate petroleum, for I knew one man who spent \$5000 drilling an oil well where the dowser indicated oil, and the well came in a "duster." Is it possible that it finds only what the operator is looking for?

In Dr. Mary Floyd Cushman's book, "MISSIONARY DOCTOR—The story of twenty years in Africa," on

page 49, she describes the customs of the natives in burying the dead.

"To the Umbunda people death is a separation of soul and body. The soul continues to live and they feel it will revisit the old haunts. They fear lest it may pay back old grudges, so they try to do what they can to please the spirits of the dead and keep them good-natured. First comes the question of the burial place. Usually this is decided by carrying the body about wrapped in a blanket and reed mat and slung upon a pole. The carriers are preceded by a diviner who has a wand and uses it very much as the hazel wand was used in our grandfather's day to find the proper location for digging a well. . . . If the motion of the wand is confirmed by a slight quivering of the corpse, the selection is surely correct."

According to the encyclopedia, it is used in France to locate water, only in that part of the world the dowser kicks up instead of pulling down. All this only adds to the confusion. One writer tells me that he dug a well where the forked stick pulled down; there was no water, but there was a channel where there had been water—a stream that had been diverted in some way. That presents a new angle to the problem.

All seems to agree that the forked stick will not work when attached to a wheelbarrow, an animal, or anyone except perhaps one man in a thousand. There are no statistics, and this estimate is only conjecture.

One writer insists that the forked stick will not work if the diviner is standing on a dry board. What about dry ground? Anyone can find water in wet ground. Some insist that the water must be in motion—a running stream. In that case, a stream comes from somewhere and goes to somewhere and the diviner should be able to follow it until it came to the surface somewhere. One man writes me that he has done this, and that raises the question of why some water finders can locate only isolated wells in some areas,

if forked stick is pulled only toward running water?

In one town where I lived, a large meadow was cut up into building lots and sold. Some home builders had wells located "professionally," and they were inexhaustible wells. Later it was found that under the entire tract there was a stratum of gravel filled with never failing water. I know—I helped a parishioner drive a steel pipe eight feet into the cellar floor of his house and the water has never failed. He decided that if there was water anywhere, he might as well have the pipe driven immediately under the kitchen sink. What puzzles me is that the forked stick ought to have dipped **everywhere or nowhere.**

How would the forked stick behave in a tunnel under a river? What would it do if the operator stood in a wet bottomed boat in a river? What success would a diviner have with the forked stick in rainy weather when the ground is wet?

One writer insists that the operator grips the forks of the stick **firmly** and the stick bends in spite of his **efforts.** In my judgment, that is where the theory disproves itself. Let someone tie the forks of the stick loosely to the wrists and rest **without being gripped** in the open palms and see if the forks strain at their bonds. Or let the bond at the wrist be a rubber band and see if it stretches.

Why must the stick have forks? I do not know but I have experimented with a slender forked stick. If the forks are held together and the one in the right hand gently twisted as when a screw is turned into wood and the other twisted as when a screw is turned out of wood, when the forks are spread apart, the butt will bend down for anyone any time. I do not mean to imply that the operator consciously puts such strain in the forks. I only know that psychic people may do things unconsciously. I have seen a table tip and ouija boards write when the operators were not aware that they supplied the motive power, but it did not occur

to anyone that the motive power was in the wood or in some underground stream. I do not deny that the stick dips sometimes, but if tipping tables and writing boards respond to psychical forces, why credit the dipping of the stick to some undiscovered force? If the forked stick is hungry for water when in some hands, why does it not kick up when a stream of water from a hose is above it?

I am assured by one writer that after finding water, they blindfolded the diviner and he found it again in the same place. I have asked them to try it again with the spectators blindfolded also.

There is no effect without a cause. When a stick bends toward water, the force is in the water or in the stick or in the man. If it is in either water or stick it will work for any man. If it works for only one man in many, that is exactly the way the tipping table and the writing ouija board behaves.

Scientists have investigated; what are their findings? Encyclopedia Britannica says, the performance is explained as "motor-automatism," also that it is "an abnormal psychological condition in the diviner analogous to clairvoyance." Borrowing the phrase of a friend, "Whatever that is, I ain't got." I might add that whatever it is, some mediums claim to have it. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that carrying a forked stick in search of water is witchcraft, but I do mean that it may work mischief if some who watch the performance are convinced that there are miraculous forces loose in the world waiting for the proper sorcerer to harness them.

One writer says he prayed earnestly that they might find water and gave thanks when they did. That puts quite another face on the matter, for many things happen in answer to prayer. I want to see some of the proposed experiments tried, before regarding the water witch as moved by a natural force.